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## Contents

Editorial	3
Sensitivity to the Other: The Example of the Samaritan Man	5
The ‘Blue Gold’ Discourse: One Dimensional?	10
God Who Is Rich in Mercy (Eph 2:4): Mercy in the Bible (Contd.)	16
A Reflection on Relationality: A Glimpse at the Future of Humankind	28
Motivation in the Intellectual Formation of the Seminarians	32
The Awesome Power of the Word of God in Human Life	46
The India of Our Dreams	59
Homily Notes	62
Book Review	85



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Editor: Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ

Circulation: Stephen Jayard

*Section Editors:*

Pastoral Theology: V M Jose SJ

Christology: Francis Gonsalves SJ

Scripture: Paul Raj

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Mysticism: George Karuvelil SJ

Administration: Dinesh Braganza

Management: Karunaidass & Patras Kujur

Finance: Alex G SJ

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*Address all correspondence (incl. DD) to:*

The Editor, AUC, Papal Seminary, Pune 411014, India Email: [kurusj@gmail.com](mailto:kurusj@gmail.com)

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## Editorial

### A Mercy-Filled Life

If there is one person who immersed herself in the “peripheries” Pope Francis is drawn to, it was Blessed Teresa of Kolkata, writes Cindy Wooden in Catholic News Service. If there was one who showed courage and creativity in bringing God’s mercy to the world, like Pope Francis urges, it was the diminutive founder of the Missionaries of Charity.

For us, the Catholic Church’s Year of Mercy will reach its culmination when Pope Francis canonizes Mother Teresa on Sept. 4, recognizing the holiness of charity, mercy and courage found in a package just 5-feet tall.

“Where Mother pushed the Missionaries of Charity to the edge, to the most difficult places,” said Ken Hackett, U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, who said he visited her houses “all the time, everywhere.”

“They were always way out there, both geographically and with the people who absolutely fell through the cracks,” he said. Mother Teresa opened homes in Ethiopia during the communist military dictatorship, in the most destitute neighborhoods of Haiti’s capital, in Rwanda after the genocide and in Yemen, where four Missionaries of Charity were murdered in March.

“When there was war, when there was fighting, there they were,” Hackett said. “They stayed.”

Mother Teresa demonstrated that living a life committed to mercy took “selflessness and courage,” he said.

Her courage also was demonstrated in her ability to “speak truth to power,” he said. Mother Teresa visited the United States regularly, speaking to Catholic groups, opening homes and meeting with presidents, including Ronald Reagan, George Bush and Bill Clinton. “She was straight out against abortion,” the ambassador said. “From conception to death -- she was the whole thing and didn’t pull any punches.”

Like Pope Francis, he said, Mother Teresa drew energy from personal, one-on-one contact with people and consciously chose to live as simply as the poor she befriended and tended.

But it is not just about “going out,” Valeria Martano, Asia coordinator for the Community of Sant’Egidio said. For both Pope Francis and Mother Teresa, she said, everything starts with prayer.

“What Mother Teresa lived, Pope Francis teaches constantly: compassion in the face of pain and never accepting indifference in the face of suffering,” said Archbishop Matteo Zuppi of Bologna, Italy. For the archbishop, Mother Teresa modeled “a church close to the poor, a church that is mother to the poor and that lives the joy of serving the poor.”

Revelations after her death that she suffered a “dark night of the soul,” decades of feeling abandoned by God, are for Archbishop Zuppi a further sign of her deep immersion in the lives of the poor and forgotten, reports Catholic News Service.

“Her spiritual director would say that thirst is knowing there is water and longing for it,” he said. “She was a woman who made the thirst of Christ on the cross her own. She lived that thirst.”

Kuruvilla Pandikattu SJ  
Editor